

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SINGAP 00548 100636Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----100639Z 120333 /11

R 100355Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7090

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 0548

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, US, VN
SUBJ: U.S.-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS

REF: STATE 028546

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED REFTEL I OBTAINED APPOINTMENT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM FEBRUARY 9 AND MADE THE POINTS ON OUR OPENING TALKS WITH THE SRV AS OUTLINED IN DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE. IN PARTICULAR, I STRESSED THAT THE INFORMATION SHOULD BE CLOSELY HELD, THAT WE CONSIDERED NORMALIZATION OF US-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS TO BE IN INTERESTS OF THE REGION AS A WHOLE, AND THAT OUR MOVE DID NOT CONSTITUTE A TURNING AWAY FROM OLD FRIENDS.

2. RAJARATNAM INDICATED THAT OUR APPROACH TO THE VIETNAMESE DID NOT CONSTITUTE ANY PARTICULAR PROBLEMS FOR SINGAPORE, SO LONG AS WE DID NOT "BUILD UP" THE SRV AT THE EXPENSE OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES. I TOLD HIM THAT WHILE WE MIGHT EVENTUALLY PROVIDE SOME HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE SRV ONCE OTHER ISSUES BETWEEN US WERE CLEARED UP, I DOUBTED VERY MUCH THAT OUR AID WOULD BE ANYWHERE ON THE SCALE ENVISAGED BY HANOI. REITERATING THE POINT THAT OUR MOVE WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE A TURNING AWAY FROM OLD FRIENDS, I SAID THAT I WAS SURE WE WOULD CONTINUE TO ATTACH THE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THESE

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FRIENDS, INCLUDING THE MEMBERS OF ASEAN.

3. RAJARATNAM REFERRED TO RECENT NEWS REPORTS OUTLINING HANOI'S NEWLY-FORMULATED POLICIES ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND LAUGHINGLY SAID THAT THE VIETNAMESE ON THE SURFACE APPEARED TO BE EVEN MORE LIBERAL THAN SINGAPORE ON GRANTING TAX EXEMPTIONS. THIS SUGGESTED THAT THEY REALLY WANTED TO CONCENTRATE ON ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT. AS ANOTHER INDICATION OF SUCH AN INTEREST ON HANOI'S PART, HE REFERRED TO AN ARTICLE IN NHAN DAN ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEPARTURE FROM HANOI OF A PHILIPPINE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TRADE MISSION TO THE EFFECT THAT THE SRV WANTED TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH ITS ASEAN NEIGHBORS. SINGAPORE WOULD REMAIN CAUTIOUS, BUT WAS PLEASED TO SEE HANOI SPEAK IN CONSTRUCTIVE TERMS. RAJARATNAM SPECULATED THAT THE NHAN DAN ARTICLE MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO COUNTER THE BAD IMPRESSION CREATED BY HANOI'S ATTACK ON THE RECENT THAI/MALAYSIAN BORDER OPERATIONS.
HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHMENT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, CAT-A
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SINGAP00548
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840084-2015, N770001-0482
Format: TEL
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770254/aaaabvbk.tel
Line Count: 72
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7b4b74c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 77 STATE 28546
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3353178
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S.-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, PEPR, US, VN, SN, (RAJARATNAM, SINNATHAMBY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7b4b74c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009